

In the Claims:

Please amend Claims 1, 2, 5, 8 and 10-15 as indicated below. The status of all pending claims is as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A magnetic disk apparatus comprising:

a cipher key memory unit which stores a cipher key used for encoding and decoding data;

a cipher encode unit which encodes data input via an interface from an upper apparatus using the cipher key, the cipher encode unit recording the encoded data onto a record medium;

a cipher decode unit which decodes the encoded data read out from the record medium using the cipher key stored in said cipher key memory unit, the cipher decode unit outputting the decoded data via the interface to the upper apparatus; and

a cipher key change unit which changes ~~at~~the cipher key used for decoding the data stored in the ~~cipher key memory unit~~record medium.

2. (Currently Amended) The magnetic disk apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

the cipher key memory unit stores a predefined cipher key written ~~in~~ at a stage of manufacturing the apparatus.

3. (Original) The magnetic disk apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein

the cipher key memory unit is a nonvolatile memory.

4. (Original) The magnetic disk apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein

the cipher key memory unit is a medium area other than a user recording area  
of the record medium.

5. (Currently Amended) The magnetic disk apparatus according  
to claim 1, wherein

the cipher key change unit changes the cipher key stored in the cipher key  
memory unit ~~when~~in response to a command for discarding all of the record data residing  
in a user recording area ~~on~~of the record medium ~~is discarded collectively~~.

6. (Original) The magnetic disk apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein

the cipher key change unit changes the cipher key in the cipher key memory  
unit in response to a special command other than a command system for the upper  
apparatus.

7. (Original) The magnetic disk apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein

the cipher key change unit changes the cipher key in the cipher key memory unit in response to a special command from a cipher key change application installed in the upper apparatus.

8. (Currently Amended) The magnetic disk apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

the cipher key change unit changes the cipher key in the cipher key memory unit in response to a special command from a cipher key change application installed by the upper apparatus via a network.

9. (Original) The magnetic disk apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein

the cipher key change unit changes the cipher key in the cipher key memory unit by recognizing a physical event manipulation in the apparatus.

10. (Currently Amended) The magnetic disk apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

the cipher key change unit changes the cipher key by generating a new cipher key through a process of, ~~e.g.~~, shuffling of the cipher key stored in the cipher key memory

unit.

11. (Currently Amended) The magnetic disk apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

the cipher key change unit changes a cipher key stored in the cipher key memory ~~unit,~~unit into another cipher key added to a cipher key change command from the upper apparatus.

12. (Currently Amended) A cipher processing method for a magnetic disk apparatus, comprising:

a cipher key memory step of storing in a memory unit a cipher key used for encoding and decoding data;

an encoding/recording step of converting data input via an interface from an upper apparatus into encoded data using the cipher key, and storing the encoded data onto a record medium;

a decoding/readout step of decoding the encoded data read out from the record medium using the cipher key stored in the memory unit, and outputting the decoded data via the interface to the upper apparatus; and

a cipher key change step of changing ~~at~~the cipher key ~~stored in the cipher key memory unit~~used in the encoding/recording step.

13. (Currently Amended) The cipher processing method for a magnetic disk apparatus according to claim 12, wherein

the cipher key change step includes changing the cipher key stored in the cipher key memory unit ~~when~~ in response to a command for discarding all of the record data residing in a user recording area ~~of the record medium is discarded collectively.~~

14. (Currently Amended) A program operable to cause a computer incorporated in a magnetic disk apparatus to execute:

a cipher key memory step of storing in a memory unit a cipher key used for encoding and decoding data;

an encoding/recording step of converting data input via an interface from an upper apparatus into encoded data using the cipher key, and storing the encoded data onto a record medium;

a decoding/readout step of decoding the encoded data read out from the record medium using the cipher key stored in the memory unit, and outputting the decoded data via the interface to the upper apparatus; and

a cipher key change step of changing ~~a~~ the cipher key ~~stored in the cipher key memory unit~~ used in the encoding/recording step.

15. (Currently Amended) The program according to claim 14, wherein

the cipher key change step includes changing the cipher key stored in the cipher key memory unit ~~when~~in response to a command for discarding all of the record data residing in a user recording area ~~on~~of the record medium ~~is discarded collectively~~.